

the National African American Reparations Commission dive into some of the most salient points in the reparations discussion. I am supporting this effort by continuing to hold the annual reparations retrospective at the Annual Legislative Conference of the Congressional Black Caucus.

I believe that H.R. 40 is a crucial piece of legislation because it goes beyond exploring the economic implications of slavery and segregation. It is a holistic bill in the sense that it seeks to establish a commission to also examine the moral and social implications of slavery. In short, the Commission aims to study the impact of slavery and continuing discrimination against African-Americans, resulting directly and indirectly from slavery to segregation to the desegregation process and the present day. The commission would also make recommendations concerning any form of apology and compensation to begin the long delayed process of atonement for slavery.

With the over criminalization and policing of black bodies, a reoccurring issue in African-American communities, I believe this conversation is both relevant and crucial to restoring trust in governmental institutions in many communities. As in years past, I welcome open and constructive discourse on H.R. 40 and the creation of this commission in the 116th Congress. Though the times and circumstance may change, the principle problem of slavery continues to weigh heavily on this country. A federal commission can help us reach into this dark past and bring us into a brighter future.

INTRODUCTION OF THE POLICE TRAINING AND INDEPENDENT REVIEW ACT

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 3, 2019

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the Police Training and Independent Review Act, a bill I introduced today with colleague LACY CLAY of Missouri.

If enacted, the Police Training and Independent Review Act would help ensure the independent investigation and prosecution of law enforcement officers in cases involving their use of deadly force. It would also help ensure that law enforcement officers receive appropriate training.

America received a wakeup call in Ferguson, Missouri. We received another in Staten Island, New York.

We received yet another in Ohio, South Carolina, Illinois, Minnesota, Louisiana and Oklahoma.

Our nation faces sobering questions about the basic fairness of our criminal justice system. And we face sobering questions about race. These questions simply cannot be ignored.

For too many, for too long, justice has seemed too lacking.

President Obama's Commission on 21st Century Policing suggested several common sense reforms, including the use of independent prosecutors for police-involved civilian deaths, as well as additional training for law enforcement officers.

Unfortunately, Congress has yet to act on these recommendations.

We need to stop asking local prosecutors to investigate the same law enforcement officers with whom they work so closely, and whose relationships they rely upon to perform their daily responsibilities. Prosecutors also often seek the support of their local police when they run for reelection.

This is an inherent conflict of interest, and if we are serious about restoring a sense of fairness and justice, we must remove this conflict immediately.

To be sure, the vast majority of prosecutors and law enforcement officers are well meaning, dedicated public servants, and we depend upon them to keep us safe from criminals. And they have dangerous jobs, as we have seen all too frequently.

But the fact remains that some officers go beyond the law in a callous disregard for due process. When it comes to investigating, and potentially prosecuting, these actions, there is often a perception of unfairness, and that perception poisons the public trust.

That is bad for law enforcement as well as citizens, making their work more dangerous.

The Police Training and Independent Review Act would give states an incentive to use independent prosecutors when police use of deadly force results in a civilian death. It would also give states and incentive to provide training to police to help them better understand the racial and ethnic diversity of the communities they serve, as well as how best to work with individuals who are disabled or mentally ill.

If states use independent prosecutors and provide appropriate training, they would become eligible for additional federal funding.

I urge my colleagues to help pass this legislation quickly, and help restore some much needed faith in our criminal justice system.

I want to thank my colleague, LACY CLAY for his partnership on this bill. He is a tireless advocate on these issues, and I am honored to work with him. I also want to thank Senator TAMMY DUCKWORTH for her leadership on this legislation, and look forward to her introducing a Senate companion soon.

COMBATTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN SCIENCE ACT OF 2019

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 3, 2019

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, today I am pleased to be joined by my good friend, Ranking Member LUCAS, in introducing the Combatting Sexual Harassment in Science Act of 2019.

Over the last year, the #MeToo movement emboldened countless women, many who had remained silent for years, to share their experiences. Their stories made it clear that the experience of sexual harassment is much too common across all segments of our society. A recent report by the National Academies of Sciences revealed that sexual harassment is pervasive in the scientific workplace—in lecture halls, laboratories, observatories, and remote field sites. The report also found that sexual harassment stifles the advancement of female scientists.

This bill establishes a research program at the National Science Foundation to examine the prevalence of and factors contributing to sexual harassment in the scientific workforce. Furthermore, this bill directs the Office of Science and Technology Policy to issue uniform policy guidance to Federal science agencies to ensure every agency has clear policies and dedicated resources to prevent and respond to incidents of sexual harassment at academic institutions receiving federal research funding. This legislation also creates an interagency working group to improve coordination and communication among agencies in addressing sexual harassment by federally funded scientists.

Sexual harassment is driving some of our brightest minds away from careers in research at a time when we need them most. If we are to tackle the scientific and technological challenges ahead of us, we must do more to ensure women are free to conduct their research without being degraded, harassed, or abused because of their gender. The Combatting Sexual Harassment in Science Act of 2019 is an important first step in that direction, and I hope Members on both sides of the aisle will support this legislation.

REINTRODUCTION OF THE BUILD AMERICA ACT

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 3, 2019

Mr. HASTINGS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Build America Act, legislation that will provide \$10 billion annually for merit-based infrastructure grants across the country. For years, House Democrats have called for a dramatic investment in infrastructure, and for years, these call calls have gone unanswered. I am hopeful that this will be the year that we finally make the investments we need. I am proud to offer my own legislation today—not for a massive, all-encompassing infrastructure package—but rather, for a common sense expansion of successful programs based on need and merit that will ensure we put money towards the greatest infrastructure needs regardless of any additional package passed in the House.

My legislation will significantly increase the size and scope of two existing infrastructure grant programs, the Capital Investment Grant Program (CIG), also known as New Starts/Small Starts, and the BUILD Grant Program, formerly known as the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Grant Program, or TIGER Grants. These programs have been immensely successful in the past, assisting rural and urban communities prioritize their own needs. Each program requires matching funds from those seeking assistance, making them smart and effective avenues for leveraging federal funding to make a real impact across the country.

My bill takes these programs out of the annual appropriations process. Instead, it establishes them as mandatory programs with permanent and expanded funding streams totaling more than \$10 billion annually.

This expansion will be welcome news to the thousands of communities like those I represent. Consider this, Madam Speaker: since